

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
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For Immediate Release

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SPRINGERTON MAN ENTERS GUILTY PLEA TO METHAMPHETAMINE CONSPIRACY

Randy G. Massey, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, today announced that on Monday, October 2, 2006, **MARK E. MALONE**, age 35, of Springerton, Illinois, pled guilty in United States District Court in Benton to one count of conspiring to manufacture and distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine. **MALONE** was charged with that offense by the Grand Jury on April 18, 2006.

MALONE's bond was revoked and he was remanded to the custody of the United States Marshal pending his sentencing which was set for January 22, 2007. **MALONE** faces a term of imprisonment from 10 years to life, a fine of up to \$4 million, and a term of supervised release to follow incarceration of at least 5 years.

The conviction in this case resulted from a long term investigation into the manufacture of methamphetamine in Wayne and White counties. Thus far, that investigation, which began in 2003, has resulted in the federal indictment of 33 individuals in related cases who, in total, were responsible for the manufacture or attempted manufacture of the equivalent of over 400,000 grams of methamphetamine. In addition to the 33 defendants who have been indicted federally, over 20 additional defendants have been prosecuted in related cases in state court by the State's Attorneys in Wayne and White Counties.

Investigation into the case is being led by the Carmi office of the Southern Illinois Drug Task Force, with the assistance of the Illinois State Police, the Fairfield Police Department, the Carmi Police Department, the White County Sheriff's Department, the Joint Narcotics Unit of the Mt. Vernon Police Department and Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Wayne County State's Attorney's Office, the White County State's Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James M. Cutchin.